

*Abode
of
Peace*

by

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala

A World Première



THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY



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First performance 15 September 1984

SOME EUROPEAN VIEWS OF INDIA

A country so vast and varied it gets a grip on you, drawing you away from the few cities to the small towns, the villages and the open countryside. Dust and distance become constant companions wandering is still an obsession. Holy men, hippies, saints and salesmen, musicians and politicians spend their days wandering around India.

Everywhere there are beggars, pretty little children who follow you for hours, legless old men on trolleys who scud along the road-side like crabs, hideous old hags or young girls with babies at their breast. Each has to offer for your curiosity some malformation or tragic appeal.

John Keay . . . *Into India*.

Why do I come I wonder. Why am I here. For 25 years I have been asking why must I return to this tormented confused, exasperating place as though I loved it, as though I needed it, as though I had to be forever reminded of its hopelessness and the splendour of its sorrow.

'karma' is the reward or punishment in the next life for the behaviour in this; and 'dharma' is the obligation to accept one's condition and perform the duties appropriate to it. This is intrinsic to the whole principle of the Hindu caste system.

The fatalism of the poor in India is not apathy but dissociation from unhappiness, just as the cruel indifference of the rich around them is not necessarily callous or cynical, but an equal acceptance of the dharma that feeds them and keeps the others hungry . . . and this is why India remains basically a country of the hungry and the unhappy.

Why is it that any discourse between Indian ladies, however familial and doubtless affectionate, as they surely must be to live so closely packed together, must always sound peevish, rancorous, disputatious? Always to the stranger's ear it has the strident overtone of argument.

James Cameron . . . *An Indian Summer*.

ABODE OF PEACE

by

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala

Characters in order of appearance

CLARE SHEILA TIFFANY

BABUJI..... CHARLES BURNEY

JEAN MARIA BRUSA

KARIM.....SANDEEP BHARDWAJ

SUSIE SASHA FOSTER

WILLY.....JOHN TURNER

THE PLAY DIRECTED BY PETER FIELD

SET DESIGNER..... JOHN ROLFE

COSTUME DESIGNER.....NIKKI TAIT

*The action of the play is set on a mountain in the
Himalayas.*

The play will be performed *without* an Interval and will end at
approximately 9.10 pm.

Stage Managers **ERIC LISTER & ALEC ATCHINSON**
Deputy Stage Manager **MARGUERITE MINSTER**
Assistant Stage Managers. **STEVE HAWKINS**
MARTIN EDWARDS
Prompt **NEVILLE BRADBURY**
Wardrobe. **NIKKI TAIT**
assisted by. **LINDA GOWLAND**
Properties **MELBA BECKFORD**
assisted by. **GAIL RICHARDSON**
Construction **TIM HAYWARD & TINA HARRIS**
assisted by. **ROGER KELLY**
Lighting. **ALAN N. SMITH**
assisted by. **SUE KENDRICK**
Sound **ALAN N. SMITH**
assisted by. **SUE CROWSON**
Assistants in all departments . . . **GEOFF MOORE, DOUG KING,**
TIM GODFREY

Sarod loaned by the **BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN**
(Institute of Indian Culture)

HOTPLATE

Delicious food is available in the Upper Foyer from 6.30 pm during the run of theatre productions.

Interval refreshments will be served and you can buy tea or coffee tokens in advance.

Orders for Interval drinks can also be given at the bar prior to the performance.

Patrons are respectfully asked to refrain from taking refreshments into the auditorium.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala was born in Cologne to Polish parents in 1927, and came to England in 1939. She took a degree in English at Queen Mary College, London University, and shortly afterwards married an Indian architect and moved to Delhi. For some 24 years she lived almost wholly cut off from European society, raising three daughters and at the same time writing continuously. The debilitating Indian climate and the tensions of Indian life — tensions detailed in her novels — now compel Mrs Jhabvala to divide her time between Delhi and a new home in Manhattan.

In 1975 her eighth novel, *Heat and Dust*, won the prestigious Booker Prize, and last year her screenplay for the film won a British Academy Award. She has written almost a dozen film screenplays — mostly in collaboration with producer Ismail Merchant and director James Ivory — and the latest — an adaptation of Henry James's novel *The Bostonians* — is about to be released.

Abode of Peace is the second play that Ruth Praver Jhabvala has written for the stage. The first was *A Call from the East*, first performed in 1974.

Someone once said that the definition of the highest art is that one should feel that life is this and not otherwise. I do not know of a writer living who gives that feeling with more unqualified certainty than Mrs Jhabvala.

CP Snow, *Financial Times*

Her tussle with India is one of the richest treats of contemporary literature.

The Guardian

A writer of genius . . . a writer of world class . . . whose interpretation of the Indian scene is but one aspect of her remorselessly intelligent yet decently sympathetic understanding of human relationships . . .

The Sunday Times

Forthcoming Attractions

IN THE PLAYHOUSE

October 6 – 13

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

by Oscar Wilde

November 3 – 17

HENRY IV Part I

by William Shakespeare

November 26 – December 3

DON JUAN COMES BACK FROM THE WAR

by Odon von Horvath

translated by Christopher Hampton

IN THE STUDIO

September 29 – October 6

THE JUST

by Albert Camus

October 31 – November 3

THE KNACKERS ABC

by Boris Vian

OPEN DISCUSSION ON *ABODE OF PEACE*

This will be led by **JOHN ELSOM** the distinguished critic and writer on theatre.

TUESDAY, 25th SEPTEMBER at 7.45pm
IN THE SHAW ROOM

All welcome

Admission free

New and Prospective Members evenings are held every **WEDNESDAY**, commencing at 7.45 pm in the Grapevine bar. Included in the programme will be a comprehensive tour of the acting areas, workshops, wardrobe and rehearsal space.
